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**FIFTY-ONE DEFENDANTS INDICTED IN FEDERAL IDENTITY
THEFT ROUND UP KNOWN AS "OPERATION RECONCILE"**

(**Richmond, VA**) - Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Bob McDonnell, Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Virginia; and representatives of the Metro-Richmond Identity Theft Task Force, held a press conference today to announce the indictment of 51 defendants in the metro-Richmond area on federal charges of identity theft and other related offenses. The initiative, known as "Operation Reconcile," was led by the Metro-Richmond Identity Theft Task Force. The Task Force was established in the fall of 2004 to address the problem of identity theft and related fraud offenses in the Metro-Richmond area.

The 51 defendants were charged in 45 indictments. Twenty-six of the defendants were charged with Aggravated Identity Theft in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028A. Enacted in July 2004, this offense carries a mandatory term of imprisonment of 24 months that must run consecutive to any other prison term imposed. Aggravated Identity Theft is the only federal fraud offense that requires a term of imprisonment upon conviction.

Attorney General McDonnell stated, "Thanks to our partnership with the Metro-Richmond Identity Theft Task Force, more than 50 perpetrators of identity theft were indicted and will be brought to justice. Identity theft is the fastest-growing white-collar crime in the nation. As we bring relief to the victims of the indicted individuals, our office will continue to work with our partners in the Metro-Richmond Identity Theft Task Force to pursue identity thieves in the Richmond area, and across the Commonwealth."

U.S. Attorney Rosenberg also announced a campaign to educate the public on the enhanced penalties for identity theft. The campaign slogan - "**Think Before You Do IT**" - is intended to provide notice that the crime of identity theft now carries a mandatory prison term of two years. The campaign will begin with banners to be displayed on the sides and interiors of buses run by the Greater Richmond Transit Company (GRTC). These buses will cover routes

throughout the city of Richmond, Chesterfield County and Henrico County. Funding for this project was provided by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; the United States Secret Service; the Bureau of Justice Assistance for the U.S. Department of Justice; and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), U.S. Department of Justice. The banners will also post the Task Force website – www.richmondIDtheft.com – which is designed to educate the public about identity theft crimes and provide resources to victims.

The combination of Operation Reconcile and **“Think Before You Do IT”** will provide deterrence in the hopes of preventing identity theft before it occurs. U.S. Attorney Rosenberg explained, “Identity theft is a vast, costly and disruptive problem that affects millions of Americans and thousands of Virginians each year. I am quite certain that charging more than four dozen Richmond-area folks and putting them in federal prison signals our resolve to combat identity theft vigorously.”

The task force consists of 15 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies participating on a full-time or part-time basis. Also announcing the indictments today are: Inspector-in-Charge Guy Cottrell, United States Postal Inspection Service, Washington Field Division; Special Agent-in-Charge Jane P. Murphy, United State Secret Service, Richmond Field Office; Special Agent-in-Charge Charles J. Cunningham, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Richmond Division; Deputy Assistant Inspector General P. Brian Crane, United States Department of Treasury, Office of Inspector General; Chief Rodney Monroe, Richmond Police Department; Chief Henry W. Stanley, Henrico County Police Department; Chief Carl R. Baker, Chesterfield County Police Department; Resident Agent-in-Charge Rob Childress, Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General; Special Agent-in-Charge John Schilling, Diplomatic Security Service, Washington Field Office; Special Agent-in-Charge Joseph Clarke, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General, Philadelphia Regional Office; and, Special Agent-in-Charge William F. Reid, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Washington Division.

The Task Force is housed at the offices of the Postal Inspection Service in Henrico County. Inspector-in-Charge Cottrell praised the cooperation of the law enforcement agencies participating in the task force: “The Metro-Richmond Identity Theft Task Force is a fine example of what can be achieved when the law enforcement community comes together to address a specific problem in the community. The member agencies of the task force are dedicated to fighting identity crime and will continue to vigorously protect the good names and identities of the citizens of metro Richmond.”

Identity Theft cases are prosecuted federally by the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Attorney General’s Office. In addition, Chesterfield Commonwealth’s Attorney William W. Davenport has an Assistant Commonwealth’s Attorney assigned to work with the task force and prosecute federally identity theft cases originating in Chesterfield County. U.S. Attorney Rosenberg also thanked Wade Kizer, Commonwealth’s Attorney for Henrico County, and Michael Herring, Commonwealth’s Attorney for the city of Richmond, for their ongoing cooperation and support of the Task Force.

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